

NEWS RELEASE

*OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS*

*RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY*

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on October 20, 2005, **JAMES JEROME WILLIAMS**, a/k/a “Fat Man,” and “JJ,” age 28, of Pontoon Beach, Illinois, was sentenced in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois. WILLIAMS, who had previously pled guilty to an indictment charging him with conspiracy to distribute more than 5 grams of crack cocaine and unlawful distribution of crack cocaine, was sentenced to 240 months’ imprisonment, 10 years’ supervised release, and was fined \$500.

According to information related in open court or contained in official court documents, the investigation established that between at least January 2004, and August 16, 2004, WILLIAMS and co-defendant TYRONE L. MERRIWEATHER, a/k/a “Bone,” and “B,” were involved with others in the distribution of crack cocaine in the Jackson County, Illinois, area. On July 26, 2004, WILLIAMS was arrested in possession of 19 grams of crack cocaine that was packaged for resale. On August 16, 2004, MERRIWEATHER sold a gun to a confidential source working for law enforcement. MERRIWEATHER has previously been sentenced to 240 months’ imprisonment for his involvement in the drug and firearm offenses.

The investigation was conducted by the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, Carbondale Police Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and Drug Enforcement Administration, pursuant to those agencies’ participation in the Project Safe

Neighborhoods initiative in the Southern District of Illinois. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses. The Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, Jackson County States Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Carbondale Police Department, Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, and Murphysboro Police Department. The Southern Illinois University Police Department also assisted in the investigation.

The case was assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson for prosecution.